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MINISTER DISCUSSES 1953 SOVIET CONSTRUCTION MATERIALS SUPPLY,
SAYS OPEN MARKET DEMAND MAY BE MET IN 2-3 YEARS

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Soviet trading organizations were supplied with 82 percent more cement, 139 percent more slate, 107 percent more soft roofing material, and 32 percent more window glass during the first 8 months of 1953 than in the same period of 1952. About 38 percent of the slate produced in 1953, over 40 percent of the window glass, and nearly 28 percent of the rolled roofing material have been for the rural population. There are now available on the market 20 times as much cement, 12 times as much slate, and 59 times as much roofing material as in 1940.

During the first 6 months of 1953, enterprises of the Ministry of Construction Materials Industry USSR fulfilled their quota of consumer goods 104 percent. In the second 6-month period, output of these goods is to be increased 22 percent over the previous 6 months.

The ministry is putting into effect a number of organizational measures designed to increase both the output and the variety of consumer goods. Plans are being made to produce mirror glass as well as to increase the output of ornamented building glass at the Moscow and the Konstantinovka glass plants. A number of glass plants now are ready to accept orders for ornamented glass from the trading organizations. The production of furniture is being organized in wood-processing plants and combines.

To supply the consumer with more building materials, the republic ministries of construction materials industry, oblast and city administrations of construction materials industry, local councils, and the construction materials industry in general are all being called upon to increase output in the plants.

The building materials plants in Krasnoyarskiy Kray, in the Latvian SSR, and in the Moldavian SSR have been using the raw material resources in those areas effectively. The production of Dutch tile, earthenware pipe, and partitioning products made from ceramics has been organized in those areas.

The Gomel' Glass Plant almost doubled its previous output of glassware, glass jars, milk pitchers, glass containers, and other products without any outlay of additional capital. The Pavshino Gypsum Plant has organized the production of gypsum-made ceiling canopies and cornices, both of which have found a large market in the building materials stores in Moscow.

To meet the demands of the kolkhozes, the construction materials industry will have to increase its efforts. According to Tsentrosoyuz (Central Union of Consumers Cooperatives), the rural population was able to get 21 times as much cement, 3 times as much slate, and 10 times as much soft roofing material in 1952 as in 1940. Although the kolkhozes have been sold greater quantities of other building materials also, the supply is not meeting demands. In addition, the kolkhozes are demanding higher-quality building materials.

Until now, the rural population has not been able to obtain enough brick, lime, and roofing material, and thus the erection of buildings on kolkhozes, sowlkhozes, and MTS has been hampered. Not only does the rural population need a great deal more window glass than the glass industry has been supplying, but it has been making greater demands for roofing material, fiberboard, plaster-board, linoleum, and various types of facing materials.

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The potential of the construction materials industry will make it possible, within the next 2-3 years, to meet the demands of the open market for all main types of building materials and products. Although the industry increased its output during the past few years, the major portion of the output of a number of plants of the ceramic, sanitary-technical, slate, glass, and brick industries is of inferior quality.

Because of the shortage of materials, the building organizations until now have been willing to accept low-grade and unsuitable materials. Now builders more and more frequently refuse the inferior materials from the supplying plants and demand better quality products. The consumer, who obtains his materials in the open market, is demanding even better quality building materials than the building organizations.

The sanitary equipment and building faience plants have also been producing low-grade equipment. Not only are the fixtures and accessories rough in spots, but they are not white enough, are poorly glazed and poorly enameled. The ministry has taken steps to improve the quality of sanitary and building faience products by adding cobalt and tin to the glazing mixture to give them a whiter color. The semifinished goods will be finished off by modern means.

Numerous complaints are also being made about the poor quality of glass. It has a wavy surface, a greenish tinge, and is not sufficiently clear. Complaints are made about the products of plants of Glavstandartdom (Main Administration of Standard Housing), Ministry of Construction Materials Industry USSR. The cabinet legs, cabinets, cupboards, stools, and other products produced by the plants are fitted together poorly and are finished carelessly.

Since the sale of consumer goods involves special procedures, the problems of expanding production and improving quality are closely allied with the necessity of making improvements in the operations of the trading organizations. Moscow's building material stores have enough glass to sell, but quite frequently the customer has to wait for glass because of the shortage of glass cutters. Although the glass plants have a large quantity of small-size glass on hand for hothouses, the consumer cooperatives have been making no demands for this glass. Meanwhile, the kolkhozes are forced to purchase large-size glass, pay more, and then have it cut to size for their hothouses. Some trading organizations are negligent in placing their orders simply because they are unaware of demands.

Serious inadequacies are found in the operations of Glavstroybyit (Main Administration for the Sale of Building Materials). This main administration has been negligent in ascertaining the requirements of the consumer; it has been limiting its functions to making out orders and to controlling the shipment of materials.

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